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TAJIKISTAN

FIRST PERSON

Apprenticeships help men find jobs

USAID partners with businesses to support youth in finding work opportunities in their communities.



Photo: CHF International

"I was pleasantly surprised to learn that I was placed as an apprentice by the USAID program. I had been unemployed for years and I had almost lost hope to find a job."

- Farhod Yusupov, a beneficiary of USAID's Alternatives to Conflict in Tajikistan (ACT) program

Today Farhod Yusupov, a 28-year old Isfara youth, holds a steady job and is dreaming about owning a business himself some time in the future. Farhod is one of the 600 young men in the remote Sughd Province of Tajikistan, who have found jobs with the assistance from the USAID Alternatives to Conflict in Tajikistan (ACT) program, implemented by CHF International.

Prior to contacting USAID's program, Farhod had been unemployed for nearly ten years. His education at the Radio Technical School in Khujand was terminated prematurely when Farhod was drafted to the army in 1994. Since his return from the army three years later, young man's efforts to find a job were fruitless, and in 2001 Farhod migrated to Russia pursuing what he thought was his only option to earn a living and support his family. However, like many of his peers, after several unsuccessful attempts to find a job, he ended up coming back to Tajikistan. Once at home, Farhod found himself unemployed again, with no improvement in his job situation.

"When I first heard about the USAID program from my brother, I didn't believe they will help me," says Farhod. "I had been unemployed for years and had almost lost hope to find a job," he explains. Through the USAID's program, Farhod was placed as an apprentice with experienced mentor in the local radio and TV repair shop "Garant." Upon completion of his six-month apprenticeship Farhod was hired by a local business that has partnered with the USAID program to create job opportunities for the local youth. Now that Farhod has a steady job, he wants to continue to gain more experience, save some money, and then start his own business back at his village.

USAID's program works with local businesses to provide apprenticeships where youth gain marketable skills. The program also offers trainings courses, where young people can acquire job-search skills, learn to think strategically, develop sound business models, and design their own enterprises. Through the USAID program, participants are provided with increased access to job opportunities and updated work skills minimizing the chance that these young people will seek work in other countries. Staying at home reduces youth's vulnerability to violence as migrants in other Central Asian countries and Russia and also reduces the strain on families and extended social safety nets that would have been forced to face the added responsibility of caring for their families without the assistance of their partners.